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SUBJECT: NAS MONTHLY REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2009

REF: BOGOTA 3604; BOGOTA 2976

SUMMARY

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Eradication numbers continue to lag behind last year's due to funding constraints affecting manual eradication progress. So far in 2009, the Colombian government has reported a total of 40 fatalities during manual eradication operations. Other GOC forces have also incurred casualties in successful operations that forge ever deeper into emerging criminal band and Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) territory. A steady increase in hostile fire, an ageing air fleet, and an increase in CNP missions and flight hours are overtaxing ARAVI's operational aircraft. The FARC and other FTO members are assuming reactionary stances and are developing counter-tactics to the MOD's demobilization efforts. The GOC continues to provide training to police counterparts in Central and South America. END SUMMARY.

- 1I. Aerial Eradication Program Update
- II. Manual Eradication Program Update
- III. Plan Colombia Helicopter Program (PCHP) Update
- IV. Colombia National Police Air Service Support (ARAVI)
Program Update
- 1V. Interdiction Program Update
- VI. Base security/Road Interdiction/NVD Program Update
- VII. Maritime Interdiction Program Update
- VIII. Communications/Weapons Program Update
- IX. Port Security Program (PSP) Update

¶X. Reestablish Police Presence Program (Carabineros)

Update

- XI. Air Bridge Denial (ABD) Program Update
- XII. Environmental Program Update
- XIII. Individual Demobilization Program Update
- XIV. Drug Demand Prevention Program Update

¶I. AERIAL ERADICATION PROGRAM

¶2. (SBU) Aircraft based in Forward Operating Locations (FOLs) in Larandia, Popayan, and Caucasia sprayed a total of 6,509 hectares (ha) in October. A total of 2,780 ha were sprayed out of Larandia;

503 out of Popayan; and 3,226 out of Caucasia. The aerial eradication team has sprayed 89,055 ha through ten months and is on track to reach its calendar year target of 100,000 ha. During October, eradication aircraft experienced eight hostile fire incidents and thirteen impacts, bringing the total for the calendar year to 37 hostile fire incidents and 66 impacts. No one was wounded or killed as a result of these incidents.

II. MANUAL ERADICATION PROGRAM

¶3. (SBU) Total manual eradication of coca through November 7 was 46,794 ha. With less than two months left in the year, Post estimates that total manual eradication in 2009 will be 57,000 hectares, well short of the 2009 manual eradication goal of 70,000 hectares (see reftel a). Phase IV of the 2009 manual eradication campaign, scheduled to begin in mid-October, began on November 10 due to funding constraints at Accion Social, the Colombian government's (GOC) civilian agency responsible for implementing the manual eradication program. In late October, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) agreed to transfer 15 billion Colombian pesos (approximately \$7.5 million) to Accion Social and avoid cancellation of Phase IV manual eradication operations. An estimated 130 to 140 mobile eradication groups will work during Phase IV under police and army protection to pull up coca in seven departments, including the main coca growing regions of Narino, Guaviare, Meta, and along the Ecuador border in Putumayo. The GOC, also behind in its 2009 goals to eradicate 500 hectares of poppy and 150 ha of marijuana, has begun eradication operations of poppy in Cauca and Narino in southwestern Colombia, and marijuana in the Sierra Nevada in northeast Colombia. As of November 5, the GOC has manually eradicated 303 ha of poppy and 85 ha of marijuana.

¶4. (SBU) As of November 9, the GOC has reported a total of 40 fatalities during manual eradication operations in 2009, including 25 security personnel, 14 civilian eradicators, and one United Nations-hired topographer embedded within a manual eradication group. Dozens of security personnel and civilian eradicators have been maimed by landmines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

NAS Bogota is exploring ways to improve the capacity of the Antinarcotics Police to detect landmines and IEDs. [Note: The number of reported fatalities is based on records held by the Colombian National Police, Colombian Army, Accion Social, reports from the field and press reports. Complete reporting of fatalities during manual eradication will not be available until the end of the year. End Note.]

III. PLAN COLOMBIA HELICOPTER PROGRAM (PCHP)

15. (SBU) PCHP aircraft operated from Tumaco, Larandia, Barrancabermeja, and Tolemaida bases and flew a total of 544 hours providing air assaults, air movements, reconnaissance, medical evacuations, and support missions for the Counter-Drug (CD) Brigade and other vetted Colombian Army (COLAR) units. Helicopter flight hours have been depleted by damage to the aircraft and the increasing need to provide additional protection from ground fire incidents. Tumaco-based PCHP helicopters provided support for

BACNA 2 (Counternarcotics Battalion of the CD Brigade) air assault missions, and armed escort for unarmed civilians and COLAR MI-17 helicopters supporting manual eradication operations. PCHP gunship helped to escort an Army MI-17 with a GOC commission that was investigating the killing of seven Awa Indians in the Barbacoas (Narino) area. PCHP flew 31 hours supporting seven medical evacuation flights transporting a total of seven patients.

IV. COLOMBIA NATIONAL POLICE (CNP)

AIR SERVICE (ARAVI) SUPPORT

16. (SBU) ARAVI's NAS-supported fleet flew 1,985 mission hours in October. During a High Value Target mission in Caqueta, the FARC impacted two UH-60s. The seven UH-60 Black Hawks closed out the month with 211 flight hours and an operational readiness (OR) rate of 75 percent. Two UH-60s are undergoing depot maintenance for structural repairs. The Bell-212 fleet flew 294 mission hours with an OR rate of 72 percent. The Huey II OR rate was 58 percent while flying 938 hours. Six Huey IIs are undergoing depot maintenance for structural repairs. As part of a deal that resulted in cost savings for the aerial eradication and COLAR aviation programs, ARAVI accepted four out of five Huey IIs from PCHP. The DC-3 fleet flew 274 hours in October, with an OR rate of 46 percent; one DC-3 is undergoing a 2,000-hour inspection. The last of the three C-26 Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Aerial Platforms (ISRAP) arrived and will undergo a final acceptance inspection.

17. INTERDICTION

17. (SBU) During the month of October, the Colombian National Police seized 10.8 metric tons of cocaine hydrochloride (HCl) and cocaine base, 21.5 metric tons of coca leaf, 12.5 metric tons of marijuana, and 42 kgs of heroin. The CNP also destroyed 15 cocaine HCl laboratories, 130 coca base laboratories, and seized 216.4 metric

tons of precursor chemicals. While working out of Forward Operating Bases in Magangue (Bolívar) and Aguachica (Cesar), the Santa Marta Junglas destroyed three clandestine airstrips, one cocaine HCl laboratory, and intercepted multi-ton shipments of precursor chemicals. Since January 1, 2009, the CNP has seized 112.7 metric tons of cocaine/cocaine base, 417 metric tons of coca leaf, 141.2 metric tons of marijuana, and 566 kgs of heroin. The CNP has destroyed 166 cocaine HCl laboratories, 1,323 coca base laboratories, and seized 22,696.7 metric tons of precursor chemicals so far this year.

18. (SBU) On October 1, the Antinarcotics Police (DIRAN) captured Marco Fidel Barba, alias "Mateo," near Apartado, Antioquia. "Mateo" had assumed control of the Daniel Rendon Herrera, alias "Don Mario," narcotrafficking group following the CNP's capture of "Don Mario" on April 15, 2009. Numerous EMCARs (mobile carabinero units) and the DIRAN Jungla (CNP Airmobile Commando) Special Reconnaissance team (15 x Junglas, 1 x UH-60) - that had just graduated from the U.S. Army Seventh Special Forces Group - ensured the capture. On October 10 in Covenas (Sucre), the DIRAN Judicial Police captured narcotrafficker Ramon Majona, wanted for

extradition to the U.S. On October 25, the CNP (2 x UH-60s, 30 x DIPOL, 30 x Junglas) conducted an airmobile assault on the FARC's Teofilo Forero Mobile Column command post near Larandia (Caqueta), killing three FARC combatants and capturing three others. Among the FARC's killed-in-action was a most-wanted criminal Herier Triana, alias "Patamala," also wanted for extradition to the U.S. According to the GOC, "Patamala" was responsible for the 2003 Club Nopal bombing in Bogota, the 2000 execution of the Turbay Cote family, the 2007 kidnapping and murder of the sister of former Colombian President Cesar Gaviria Trujillo, and the 2005 murder of former senator Jamie Lozano Perdomo, among others. "Patamala" was also reportedly responsible for a series of assassinations committed against various town council members, the failed plan to kill former Minister of Defense Manuel Santos and his family, and was thought to be the author of the 2007 frustrated plan to kidnap U.S. Embassy personnel in Melgar, Tolima. During this assault, two CNP officers were wounded, one of whom died from his injuries on October 28.

19. (SBU) On September 2, DIRAN Junglas deployed a nine-man Mobile Training Team (MTT) to Mexico to provide 60 days of antinarcotics training to 60 members of the Jalisco State Police. The DIRAN's four-man MTT traveled to Bolivia on October 17 to provide instruction at the Garras School on cocaine laboratory destruction, chemical safety, and evidence handling. Argentinean, Paraguayan, and Brazilian nationals also attended this training. The Jungla Commando International Course, comprised of 54 international and 29 CNP students, will continue until December 3. The Combat Medic Course's 39 students will graduate on December 15. Six U.S. Army Special Forces trainers arrived in Colombia on September 24 and will assist with training at Pijaos through April. DEA Bogota helped the Bogota Junglas to develop a live fire reaction pistol and rifle range at the Facatativa base. From October 22-28, DEA trainers provided advanced marksmanship training to the Jungla Special Reconnaissance section. From October 25-28, the Colombian Red Cross conducted a "Vertical Rescue" course for 20 Junglas from Santa Marta, Tulua, Facatativa, and Espinal. On October 5-6, the Panama Border Force Deputy Commander Commissioner Heyer, Operations Officer Major Lizcano, and NAS Panama's Chip Gusler visited DIRAN headquarters, the Facatativa Jungla company, and the 25 Panama Jungla students at Pijaos.

¶10. (SBU) On November 6, 32 students (out of the original 40) graduated from the Base Security course at the newly-designated DIRAN Northwest Zone base in Necocli (Uraba Gulf, Atlantic Coast). The IDIQ Bastion Wall in Necocli will be completed by November 17. Phase II of the Miraflores IDIQ project was interrupted by a two-week land ownership disagreement that was subsequently resolved; the project is slated to be completed by the end of November. NAS Night Vision Device (NVD) program officers worked on the final outfitting of the Jungla NVD laboratory at Pijaos, the relocation of the NVD container laboratory from Espinal to Pijaos, and the renovation of the NVD container laboratory at Bogota's El Dorado airport.

VII. MARITIME INTERDICTION

¶11. (SBU) On October 1, near Buenaventura, the Pacific Coast Guard (CG) Command seized a vessel carrying 645 kgs of marijuana. Three days later, the CG Command seized another vessel in the same area with 25 plastic containers containing 950 kgs of cocaine. On October 21, the U.S. Coast Guard captured an SPSS (self-propelled semi-submersible) near the Guatemalan Coast and detained three Colombians and one Mexican, seizing 4.9 metric tons of cocaine.

¶12. (SBU) The Colombian Navy Intelligence tactical unit (GRUIN) conducted tactical training in October in support of a month-long deployment near the Uraba Gulf (Atlantic Coast) and Choco (Pacific Coast). During the deployment near the Uraba Gulf, the unit located two abandoned BACRIM camps that appeared to have housed up to 15 bandits per camp. In a follow-on mission in the vicinity of Necocli, the GRUIN commandos seized 1.5 metric tons of cocaine stored at a ranch. The Tumaco (Narino) Coast Guard station stopped a vessel coming from Ecuador that was carrying 275 gallons of contraband fuel likely to be used at cocaine laboratories in the region.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS/WEAPONS

¶13. (SBU) During October, DIRAN's mobile training and repair teams installed NAS-procured High Frequency (HF) and Tadiran Very High Frequency System (VHF) repeaters, repaired Motorola hand-held radios, and took inventory in Popayan, Norte de Santander, Tumaco, Barrancabermeja, Florencia, Larandia, and Tulua. DIRAN representatives from San Jose, Santa Marta, and Tulua received NAS-procured training in data networks, fiber optic cabling, and general electrical properties. DIRAN continued to install remote security cameras at the armories in Bogota's DIRAN headquarters, and in police bases at Guaymaral, Ipiales, and Facatativa. These security cameras allow the DIRAN weapons officer-in-charge to access all of the armories via the Internet Protocol (IP) network. NAS hosted a conference for all of 27 Telematica DIRAN communications members to review projects.

¶14. (SBU) The DIRAN weapons section received 300 Sig Pro 2022 pistols from the CNP to support airport/ports programs and antinarcotics companies. The Junglas will continue using NAS-procured Berretta M9 pistols. The weapons team deployed MTTs

to Tumaco (Narino), Cauca, and Florencia in support of manual eradication groups.

IX. PORT SECURITY PROGRAM (PSP)

¶15. (SBU) DIRAN's Ports and Airports Area (ARPAE) units seized 460.9 kgs of cocaine, 0.5 kgs of marijuana, and arrested 22 people at Colombia's airports. At the Bogota airport, 6.3 kgs of cocaine

and one kg of heroin were seized and two people arrested. At the Pereira airport, 28.9 kgs of cocaine were seized and five people arrested. At Cali's Palmira airport, 1.1 kgs of cocaine and three kgs of heroin were seized and two people arrested. At Medellin's Rionegro airport, one kg of cocaine was seized and two people arrested. In Cartagena's port and airport, one kg of cocaine was seized and two people arrested. In Barranquilla's port and airport, 330 kgs of cocaine and 25 kgs of heroin were seized and two people arrested.

¶16. (SBU) ICE polygraph examiner conducted polygraph exams on 102 members of DIRAN's interdiction, ports and airports units. Seventy-eight passed the exam, 23 failed, and one exam had inconclusive results. Sixteen Dominican Republic Customs and Police officers participated in NAS Dominican Republic-sponsored training at Bogota's El Dorado airport's DIRAN unit. Two DIRAN analysts from Bogota airport and Cartagena seaport will provide NAS Guatemala-sponsored training to Guatemalan counterparts on document analysis. NAS Bogota and NAS Lima sponsored training for two Peruvian customs officers in Bogota on the use of NAS-procured body scanners.

¶X. REESTABLISH POLICE PRESENCE PROGRAM (CARABINEROS)

¶17. (SBU) On October 15, 147 new police graduated from the CNP Academy at Yuto (Choco). This USG-supported police academy was created five years ago to provide opportunities for Afro-Colombian youth and women, enhancing security and improving perceptions of the police in the marginalized Pacific Coast region of Colombia. Deputy Governor, Choco's regional Chief of the Police, and other notables attended the ceremony. The top graduate was a female officer. Major Cuesta, Commander of the Yuto School, expressed interest in having Choco candidates participate in the NAS Police Scholarship Program next year.

XI. AIR BRIDGE DENIAL (ABD)

¶18. (SBU) Out of 1,711 tracks over Colombia, five were declared Unknown, Assumed Suspect (UAS). Three aircraft did not carry illegal items on board, and the Colombian Air Force was not able to locate the other two. The SR-560 flew 82 missions for 180 hours.

XII. ENVIRONMENTAL

¶19. (SBU) In July, the environmental section analyzed the complaint system and focused on closing the oldest cases out of the then back-log of 791 complaints. Due to the difficulties in determining if legitimate damage had occurred in cases that dated as far back

as 2005, the environmental section compensated 37 out of 81 complainants whose plots were visited. The team has closed out all complaints from 2005 and 2006, and has 13 complaints that remain to be verified that include the last complaints from 2007 and 2008.

¶20. (SBU) In October, the antinarcotics police received 101 complaints, closed 183 cases, and compensated approximately \$14,531 to seven complainants. The environmental section continues to focus on decreasing the 2,206-case back-log; however, the influx of complaints from Narino has decreased the speed with which cases can be processed and closed (see reftel b). In lieu of a formal agreement that cannot be established at this time, the NAS lawyer is working on a letter to establish specific guidelines to ensure quick and effective handling of crop-damage complaints. Once the recently-acquired high-imagery ADS camera has undergone the required tests, it should greatly assist in verifying complaints and result in savings to the complaints program.

¶21. (SBU) On October 27, CNP Inspector General's office organized a videoconference on eradication operations, specifically focusing on the complaints process. The environmental lawyer briefed the audience on the crop damage process and the National Institute of Health (INS) gave a presentation on the health complaints process. The conference was broadcast throughout Colombia.

¶22. (SBU) As of November 6, INS will house the first laboratory in Colombia capable of analyzing glyphosate in body fluid samples, reducing costs and helping to nationalize USG efforts. On October 16, INS trained approximately 20 CNP officials on the proper collection of water samples. According to the Environmental Management Plan, the GOC is required to collect water samples prior to, immediately after, and 60-days following spray operations.

XIII. INDIVIDUAL DEMOBILIZATION PROGRAM

¶23. (SBU) The MOD's Humanitarian Attention Program for the Demobilized (PAHD) has received 20,250 combatants since 2002, including 208 insurgents in October, and 2,333 to date in 2009. The FARC's demobilization numbers are more than 1,000 short of last year's 3,027 to date, however, the ELN's demobilization numbers stand at a record 430 for this year. (Comment: The most likely factor contributing to lower demobilization is a natural leveling off after the extraordinarily high demobilization rates in 2007 and ¶2008. The high demobilization numbers in the previous two years were strongly correlated to areas under sustained military pressure, especially those affected by desertion, and capture or death of insurgent leaders. Reduced military pressure and a lack of major psychological blows may lower the motivation to desert, but a more important factor is an increased tendency for insurgents to avoid direct contact with security forces and the local

population which reduces the opportunities to escape. The FARC also reportedly employ demobilization "counter-measures" such as separation of FARC couples, prohibition of radio use, and execution of those caught or accused of attempts at desertion. End comment.)

¶24. (SBU) In response to FARC counter-measures, the MOD has created tactical demobilization positions throughout the Joint Task Force Omega (JTF-O) area of operations along with other tailor-made

demobilization initiatives. One such position is in the Catatumbo region (Norte de Santander), where a customized communications strategy was designed to take advantage of a reported local FARC leader's tendency to abuse his personnel, among other factors.

XIV. DRUG DEMAND PREVENTION

¶25. (SBU) On October 5-7, NAS Lima provided training to NAS and Colombian NGOs Mentor, Surgir, and Lions Club International representatives on community coalition building. These NGOs will create the first three drug demand prevention community coalitions in Bogota, Medellin, and Barranquilla, respectively. On October 28, an INL/RM-approved request for community coalition-creation proposals was sent to these NGOs; the grants will be awarded upon the receipt of FY2009 funds. NAS provided support for the October 19-22 UNODC/Ministry of Social Protection conference on heroin where 30 regional leaders participated. NAS also provided support for the October 21-23 National Directorate on Dangerous Drugs (DNE) conference for researchers studying illegal drug use issues. On October 29, NAS-supported DARE Mexico trainers completed training for 30 CNP's DARE officers on expanding the program to high schools and parents.

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